

University of Dundee

Citizen Science Projects (MOOC) 4.3

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In the first week of this course, we discussed [How to Choose a Question](<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/weobserve-the-earth/3/steps/870606>) and then looked at [Campaign Design Best Practices](<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/weobserve-the-earth/3/steps/870608>) from the perspective of recruiting participants. Now, in this final week, we'll plan for the end of a campaign, when we have some results to share.

When we first discussed how to design a campaign, you were invited to consider:

- + an environmental issue that concerns you or your community
- + that you want to do something about
- + and that a citizen observatory can address

At that stage, you needed to think about:

- + the audience you wanted to influence
- + the changes they wanted to make
- + and the communication channels that would most effectively reach the relevant stakeholders.

There are several key questions that you need to think about when designing the end of your campaign, and how you would like to make an impact:

##Who is your target audience?

There is likely already a group of stakeholders who are professionally responsible for this issue or who actively monitor this issue already. Who are they? Have you been speaking with them throughout your campaign? Understanding who this audience is will determine how you present your findings and frame your request for change or action.

##How will you communicate with these stakeholders during the campaign?

What information is useful and actionable for these stakeholders? How are they used to receiving information from local communities – are there official channels for this, or are they reachable via email? Are they already aware of these issues but require better evidence? Is this an emerging issue for which there is not yet much attention? By sharing stories, early outcomes, and near real-time visualisations of the data collected, you can keep these stakeholders informed and on board with the goals of your project.

##Plan for a range of face-to-face events to engage with wider groups of stakeholders

You might choose activities and events such as:

- + One-to-one meetings and interviews
- + Town hall meetings
- + Knowledge exchange groups (including steering groups, advisory panels, multi-stakeholder forums)
- + Informal contact
- + Workshops, focus groups and other types of assembly, including social events
- + Stakeholder-led workshops or conferences focussed on relevant issues linked to the observatory
- + Talks or lecture
- + Practical demonstrations, including participatory activities (e.g. training, games)
- + Field or laboratory visits to facilitate shared dialogue and understanding of study sites or research processes

##What parameters and data formats are relevant?

What type of data do these stakeholders need to act? Do the data gathered by your citizen observatory need to augment existing data sources, fill in gaps in the existing data, or provide data for which no sources yet exist? When you find out what kind of data format your key decision-makers usually base their decisions on, you can design a targeted campaign that can lead to tangible outcomes.

##What is the geographical scope of your campaign?

Your campaign may be local in scale, or you might want to collect data globally. What is the decision-making scope of the stakeholders who can have the biggest impact on the outcomes you want to see? Can they only act at the local level? Are they responsible for a larger geographical area? You'll need to decide on the geographic boundaries of your campaign so that you can engage the right decision-makers.

##Do they already care about the issue or are they resistant to it?

When you know what issues they are already paying attention to, and where they have doubts about validity, you can choose the right type of data to collect and an impactful way to present it.

##What tools can empower stakeholders to act?

The ability to act rarely exists at one level. Who else needs to be convinced about the need for action? What evidence can you give to help them strengthen their case for action? It may sound cynical to think about how to make your stakeholder look good to their higher-ups, but if you can empower them to act by providing the evidence they need, this will help your cause.

##What are the consequences of not acting?

Many environmental issues have a political element where the consequences of not acting have a political fall-out. Is the local economy at risk? Will residents be harmed or are votes at stake? We have been discussing how to engage participants throughout the course, but you'll also need to think about what motivates your stakeholders, e.g. local policy makers, and what will make them want to take action based on your data.

Don't forget to credit your participants

Citizen science is a collaborative effort, and it is vital to recognise the time and effort participants have donated. There are many ways to do this. You can name a smaller group of people if they give their permission for you to do so, for example. Good practice is to ask them who they wish to be acknowledged.

For an excellent detailed guide on engaging with stakeholders to ensure that your citizen observatory achieves its desired impact, we recommend the [BiodivERsA Stakeholder Engagement Handbook](<https://www.biodiversa.org/stakeholderengagement>).

In the next step, we will learn more from a range of Citizen Observatories about how they shared their data.